



Virginia Trees for Clean Water Grant Request for Proposal

Through funds from Virginia Water Quality Improvement Funds and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) CB Rapp, Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) has developed the Virginia Trees for Clean Water (VTCW) program. The program is designed to improve water quality across the Commonwealth through on-the-ground efforts to plant trees where they are needed most and to help meet the Phase III WIP goals. Grants may be awarded to civic groups, communities, local government, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, public educational institutions, state agencies, tribal organizations, and volunteer groups.

There will be approximately **\$700,000** available to fund projects during the current grant cycle. The funding range for proposals is **\$1,000 to \$50,000** per project. If you have a project in mind that is estimated to exceed the \$50,000 project limit, please call to discuss with Urban & Community Forestry program contact below **prior to submission**. This cycle of grant funds will be used for projects occurring in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023. Please submit your applications by email on **Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 4:30 pm**.

Winning proposals must demonstrate the merit of the project and how the trees will be maintained in perpetuity. The Environmental Justice Screening tool: (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>) will be used to prioritize planting projects funded.

Grant funds will be reimbursed at the conclusion of the project. Providing match (including in-kind) is recommended for all projects (match what you can), but not being able to match the grant project by 50% will not affect your ability to receive funding under this cycle. However please describe any match, including in-kind, you will be able to provide in both your narrative and budget. All applicants applying for a federally funded award must have BOTH a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI); applicants applying for a state funded award must have a FEIN.

OBJECTIVES of Virginia Trees for Clean Water

- Plant trees that restore and improve the waters for the benefit of current and future citizens of the Commonwealth.
- Achieve long-term improvements in water quality through long-lived tree cover and increased public involvement.
- Raise public awareness about the benefits of planting trees for the health of our citizens, streams, wildlife, and rivers.
- Help the Commonwealth meet Phase III WIP goals.

Proposal Categories

Projects funded through the program include tree-planting activities of all types. A long-term maintenance plan **must be included** with the grant application. **Both trees and shrubs are allowable.** Projects are not limited to the following examples:

- **Riparian tree planting** in non-Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) areas, including urban areas and private lands. Plantings should be a minimum of 35 feet wide. A maximum of 435 seedlings per acre will be paid for by the grant on a 10 x 10 spacing.
- **Community tree planting** projects include any tree plantings on public lands.
- **Street tree planting** projects including planting strips and cutouts. Cutouts must be at least 4 ft. x 10 ft. or equivalent to be considered for funding under the program. Proposed projects with planting strips or cutouts less than 3 feet wide will not be considered.
- **Neighborhood or NeighborWoods tree plantings** may be organized by the local civic groups or neighborhood associations or by the community government. Projects should be located on common grounds or within 35 feet of the roadway.
- **Turf to Trees (T2T) projects** include conversion of regularly mowed lawns greater than 0.1 acres to trees, usually using tree seedlings, saplings, or small potted trees. The cost of tree protection is an allowable expense. Annual mowing between the seedlings is also allowed.

Proposal Format

The proposal should not exceed **four** pages, plus the application and budget pages. Photos and a recommendation letter from local VDOF staff **should** be included in the proposal. These do not count towards the four-page narrative.

- Background of project area and description of need
- Experience in completing similar projects
- Explanation of community engagement where trees being planted
- Project description/scope of work
- Design plan drawing, site photos and species list
- Tree maintenance plan
- Deliverables / expected outcomes

Attached Documentation Required:

- Signed Application Form
- Provided Budget Form
- VDOF local staff recommendation letter
- Virginia W9

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Eligible Reimbursable Costs:

The only costs eligible for reimbursement are those associated with one or more of the following:

- Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants.
- Purchase of essential supplies and materials.
- Purchase and planting of trees and shrubs.
- Maintenance expenses, including watering, are eligible for reimbursement during the grant period; however, VDOF cannot reimburse until after all deliverables/activities have been completed. Maintenance costs will be ineligible if submitted outside the approved grant period.
- Costs associated with site preparation and soil amendments.

Eligible Non-reimbursable Costs (Applicant's Share or Match):

The following costs are not reimbursable BUT are allowed to meet the encouraged match for the project.

- Cash or in-kind donations and services.
- Salary and fringe costs for paid staff.
- Volunteer labor, machinery, and equipment.
- Overhead and/or indirect costs.

Ineligible Costs (And NOT allowed for this grant):

- Purchase of machinery or equipment.
- Construction of any kind (e.g., sidewalks or roads).
- Purchase of food, snacks, or beverages.
- Purchase of land or land charges.
- Purchase of plant material classified as invasive species.
- Purchase and planting of ash species (*Fraxinus* sp.) due to the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*).
- Costs that are not incurred during the grant award period.
- Costs not approved by the U&CF program manager during the award phase or by grant modification.

Additional General Criteria

- All projects should include a site plan, plant list, tree planting specs, site photos, and a commitment to the project's long-term success from specified personnel or individuals.
- Applications should include a letter of permission/support for the planting if the project is not on the applicant's personal property. This letter should designate the organization responsible for the long-term maintenance of the project.

- All projects must have a direct community engagement component. Please describe how you have engaged or are going to engage with the residents or the local community where the tree planting is going to occur. Community engagement must be completed prior to tree installation to receive funding in hopes of empowering local citizens to take an active role in the development and maintenance of their urban forest. It can take many forms such as virtual town halls, volunteer training, educational outreach or distributing flyers to name just a few. Please reach out if you have any questions on this requirement.
- Projects should educate participants of the water quality benefits of tree planting.
- We require local VDOF staff to review the project prior to proposal submission. The local VDOF forester should provide a letter of recommendation for the project, to be submitted with the proposal. Please use the “Find a Forester” feature on the VDOF website (<https://dof.virginia.gov/>) to find the appropriate staff to assist with your project.
- A detailed tree maintenance plan must be included with each grant application. All projects must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years. Awardees must sign a maintenance agreement.
- Grant funds will not be approved for projects that are initiated as a requirement of zoning, mitigation etc.
- All eligible reimbursement costs listed above must be deemed reasonable, necessary for the project and be approved by the U&CF program manager during the award phase.
- Successful applicants cannot commence work or incur any expenses against the grant until an agreement between VDOF and the authorized agency/organization has been signed. Expenses incurred outside the agreement period shall be deemed ineligible for reimbursement.
- Trees for riparian projects should generally be seedlings; other projects may be funded for trees up to 2-inch caliper.
- Any street tree planting should provide the square footage of planting space, such as the dimensions of the tree pit or planting strip for each site.
- NeighborWoods projects must be carefully planned and technically sound, and involve the assistance of qualified technical experts, agencies, or organizations.
- NO large shade trees shall be planted under power lines.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or want to discuss a potential project, please contact
Lara Johnson, U&CF Program Manager
900 Natural Resources Dr., Suite 800
Charlottesville, VA 22903
804.239.0813
Lara.Johnson@dof.virginia.gov

Email the application package by 4:30 pm, Thursday, August 25, 2022 to be considered for funding for fall 2022 and spring 2023 plantings. Please make sure you receive a response email verifying submission within 24 hours. If not, please email and/or call to confirm submission. All applicants will be notified of grant status via phone or email by September 9, 2022.

Payment Process

The funds awarded under the grant are available on a **reimbursement basis** in accordance with a payment schedule agreed to in advance. Funds awarded under the grant are available once satisfactory work has been completed, within the contract period as described in the original scope of work, and after verification of expenditures and match. Grantees must file a *Request for Reimbursement* (included in the award paperwork package) and send records of expenditures along with documentation of all costs to the Virginia Department of Forestry.

In addition, a planting quality inspection must be conducted, and projects logged using VDOF My Tree Counts Application (<https://arcg.is/WryDG>) before the final reimbursement will be issued and the grant closed. The U&CF program manager will evaluate the progress of the project to determine eligibility for full funding. A final report with photographs of the completed project is also required for all entities receiving a grant before reimbursement can occur. The entity receiving the grant must keep all expenditure records for up to 5 years and submit copies as part of the reimbursement request.

Guidelines for Budget Categories

Project Budget Form

The Project Budget Form summarizes the project budget. For approved projects, in addition to the application, this form is an element of the grant agreement. This form is used to record a summary of all expenditures and matching funds. Guidelines for budget categories for project expenses are below.

- **Trees:** This category covers the cost of the trees and woody shrubs that will be planted for the project. We recommend that applicants obtain quotes for the cost of trees from nurseries so estimated budgets are more accurate. Tree costs must be listed in the narrative, in sufficient detail to determine if they are reasonable and allowable.

- **Supplies:** This category includes the supplies needed to plant the trees such as tree protectors, mulch etc. These items must be listed in the narrative, in sufficient detail to determine if they are reasonable and allowable.
- **Labor:** Costs associated with hiring private contractors/consultants to assist or complete a turn-key tree installation are allowable. Costs associated with site preparation and soil amendments are also allowable. We recommend that applicants obtain quotes for the cost of installation and/or site prep so estimated budgets are more accurate. Labor costs must be listed in the narrative, in sufficient detail to determine if they are reasonable and allowable.
- **Maintenance:** Maintenance expenses, including watering, are eligible for reimbursement during the grant period; however, VDOF cannot reimburse until after all deliverables/activities have been completed. Maintenance costs will be ineligible if submitted outside the approved grant period.
- **Volunteers:** The use of volunteer hours as an in-kind match is acceptable and encouraged. However, volunteer hours must be appropriately documented. You must use the Volunteer **Assistance Time and Activity Log** contained in this package or a form constructed in a similar format. It is essential that we have the date and times for the volunteer's service and his or her signature. If the form is compiled by the volunteer supervisor, then it should be **signed** by that person at the bottom. Volunteer hours are valued at the current rate established by the Independent Sector, which is \$29.95 per hour.
- **Travel:** Mileage traveled directly related to the project, travel reimbursements are for actual costs based on organization policies and is not to exceed those included in the *Commonwealth of Virginia Policies & Procedures, Topic No. 20335, State Travel Regulations*. A vehicle mileage rate of \$.625/mile is used.
- **Contractual:** Contractual costs include subcontracted work to be completed by those other than the project sponsor. This may include design and engineering services. We recommend that applicants obtain quotes for needed contractual services so estimated budgets are more accurate. Contractual costs must be listed in the narrative, in sufficient detail to determine if they are reasonable and allowable.